

Connecticut Heating & Cooling Contractors Association

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MEMBERS OF: CBIA – NFPA – ICC

Established 1972



TESTIMONY OF JENNIFER JENNINGS EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SUPPORTING

HB-5870, AN ACT CONCERNING HOME IMPROVEMENT CONTRACTORS, & SB-461, AN ACT CONCERNING HOME IMPROVEMENT CONTRACTORS BEFORE THE GENERAL LAW COMMITTEE FEBRUARY 22, 2011

2011

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The Connecticut Heating & Cooling Contractors Association (CHCC) submits the following comments supporting HB-5870 & SB-461, Acts Concerning Home Improvement Contractors:

Members of the heating and cooling industry support this legislation which would require home improvement contractors to pass a state exam and demonstrate knowledge of their trade before performing work on individuals' homes. This is no more burdensome of a requirement than the long established state licensing system that currently exists for all occupational and building trades.

State law establishes a licensing system for several occupational trades overseen by the Examining Boards for the Electrical Work; Heating, Piping, and Cooling Work; Plumbing and Piping Work; Elevator Installation, Repair, and Maintenance Work; Automotive Glass Work and Flat Glass Work; and Fire Protection Sprinkler Systems Boards. Each trade has different levels of expertise—apprentice, journeyman, and contractor. Workers must meet education, training, and experience requirements to qualify for each level. Some trades also include a mandatory continuing education requirement. Members of the heating and cooling trades who hold unlimited licenses are qualified to perform any and all work related to their trade. The occupational licensing boards, which are comprised of both union and non-union contractors as well as the general public, also provide an important mechanism for ensuring the consistent and fair enforcement of the state's licensing laws. Because the boards provide balanced representation of the industry, license holders respect their decisions. Currently, no such system or requirements exist for home improvement contractors other than a simple registration process. Almost anyone can register to be a home improvement contractor, despite lacking any relevant credentials or experience, thus putting homeowners at risk.

Passage of this legislation is necessary and desired by all tradespersons in the industry to ensure that homeowners are safe and that work is done only by competent, skilled and trained tradespersons. Far too many contractors do not maintain the proper licenses or qualifications, creating public safety concerns. These laws must be vigorously enforced to protect consumers and employees. Strong enforcement of the state's licensing and apprenticeship laws relative to the heating and cooling industry along with all licensed trades is paramount. Ensuring that individuals performing work are held to high standards helps maintain the highest possible level of safety, training and professionalism for our industry, and for consumers, and home improvement contractors should be no exception.

CHCC thanks Committee for its consideration of our comments and urges passage of these bills.

CHCC is a trade association whose objectives are to strengthen and further trade relations, attract, educate and train necessary manpower, represent members at all levels of government and review and establish quality standards and